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World Christian Community

Born into a world not of our own choosing, we are heirs of ugliness and beauty, evil and goodness, sin and salvation. Increasingly as the world shapes us we become responsible for shaping the world, until we, and our fellow-men, are the world, donors to the next generation of the ugliness and beauty, evil and goodness, sin and salvation that is of our making. As Christians we have made a moral choice; we have committed ourselves to doing God's will in the world. In token of this we have joined the Church and it is the glory of the Protestant Church that it is of our making, the united act of Christians to express the corporate will of God.

Our world is a changing world, a dangerous world, a world full of bitter hatreds and high idealism. It is a world in which downtrodden peoples are demanding justice, a world in which the old shackles of superstition and fears of the past are being discarded and new ways are being tried, a world in which the money and science and education that are at hand for the betterment of mankind are being used also for its destruction. The totalitarian state is no new phenomenon in human society but never before has it had in its control so many avenues of power over human destiny. In many parts of the world the state is training its citizens to a way of

life hostile to Christianity, irreconcilable in ideal and reality with its teaching. In the midst of these conflicting philosophies of life we need the positive, constructive, strong and convincing voice of the Church that love is at the heart of the universe. We need, too, its guidance as to how to make that love reality in the face of these hostile forces. It is a testing time for the Church and the outcome is not at all certain.

We are part of a worldwide Christian community and what happens to the Church in one part of the world is of vital importance for us all. What kind of church is this that we are making? Is it equal to the test of these dangerous days? A divided church, a narrow church, a static church, a self-centered church is doomed to failure. A church united in purpose, consecrated to the will of God, self-forgetful in its deep concern for the world not yet won to Christ, such a church will raise up martyrs in the new day worthy to be called Christian. Christian fellowship, so necessary to vital Christian living, is not enough: fellowship in working for the coming of the Kingdom of God is the life-breath of the world Christian community. This means missionary activity in the broadest meaning of that word. A missionary church is needed that dares to claim this world for Christ.

The missionary work of the American church is a glorious inheritance and out of it is just beginning to emerge the worldwide Christian community. Today the younger churches are joining with the older churches in missionary activity, linked together in visible organization by the International Missionary Council. This organization, representing twenty-four national Christian councils in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, has a small staff which serves as a coördinating force, ever watchful of world trends, always at the disposal of

the national councils for advice and assistance, alert to needs and ready to rally the Christian forces of the world. They serve to lift into light the efforts of the churches in various parts of the world so that the experience of any one group may serve as encouragement and inspiration to all. Through the Council churches in all parts of the world may keep in active touch with each other and come to know in reality the blessings of spiritual unity that transcends national and racial differences. Thus in practice rather than in preaching the worldwide Christian community becomes a reality. The International Missionary Council is the organization through which the churches of the world are working together and are coming to know each other better, to aid each other more effectively, to stimulate each other to greater action and together to know the will of God and give it effect.

The International Missionary Council functions through international conferences and special research projects, by soliciting the aid of individual experts and of foundations, by publishing occasional papers and a quarterly magazine, the *International Review of Missions*, and by carrying on a variety of activities through the services of its staff. Its officers include the chairman, Dr. John R. Mott, three secretaries, and three assistant secretaries. These are supplemented by a research specialist who heads the Department of Social and Industrial Research and Counsel, and by the Director of the Department on the Christian Approach to the Jews.

The next meeting of the International Missionary Council will be held in Hangchow, China, in 1938. The central theme of that conference will be the Church, the faith by which it lives, its witness in the world, its inner life, its environment, and closer coöperation in its work. The Council and its coöperating national organ-

izations will focus their work on these topics during the next two or three years, not in preparation for the Hangchow meeting alone but for the enrichment of the life of the Church.

The Council is the servant of the Church, and of the Christians who form the Church. It is an organization established by the churches and supported by them. Its work is dictated by them in international conference. It is their instrument in moulding a new world, and it is yours. Through it you are linked in active work with Christians of all parts of the world. As you come to know its work, you will come to realize the vitality and strength of the worldwide Christian community. We invite your interest and coöperation and prayer, especially as we go forward in the preparation for the Hangchow meeting of the Council. If you wish to be informed on its progress through its news bulletins, send your name to:

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